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COMMITTEE ON THE PEACEFUL USES
OF OUTER SPACE
Scientific and Technical Subcommittee
Thirtieth session
Working Group on the Use of Nuclear
Power Sources in Outer Space

DRAFT REPORT OF THE WORKING GROUP ON THE USE OF NUCLEAR POWER SOURCES IN OUTER SPACE ON THE WORK OF ITS TENTH SESSION

1. The Working Group on the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, reconvened in accordance with General Assembly resolution 47/67 of 14 December 1992, paragraph 12, held its tenth session at United Nations Headquarters from 27 February to 5 March 1992 under the chairmanship of Mr. J. H. Carver (Australia), during the thirtieth session of the Scientific and Technical Subcommittee.

2. The Working Group held ___ meetings and adopted the present report at its meeting, on ___ February 1993.

3. The Working Group expressed its satisfaction that, on the basis of many years of work in the Committee and its subcommittees, the General Assembly had adopted a Set of Principles Relevant to the Use of Nuclear Power Sources in Outer Space, as contained in resolution 47/68 of 14 December 1992.

4. The Working Group noted that the Principles provided that they should be reopened for revision by the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space no later than two years after their adoption.

5. Noting, inter alia, that technology relating to the use of nuclear power in space was continuing to develop, that international recommendations on radiological protection were continuing to evolve and that the adopted principles were limited in scope, the Working Group agreed that it was useful to consider how they might be improved. None the less, the Working Group noted that the Principles had been adopted by the General Assembly and would remain in their current form until such time as they were amended.

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6. The Working Group considered that an incremental approach to improving the Principles should be considered.

7. The Working Group noted that the General Assembly, in paragraph 12 of resolution 47/67, had invited Member States to report to the Secretary-General on a regular basis with regard to national and international research concerning the safety of nuclear-powered satellites and that a number of Member States had submitted information as contained in document A/AC.105/542 and Add.1 and 2.

8. The Working Group took note of working papers submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (A/AC.105/C.1/L.187) and the Russian Federation (A/AC.105/C.1/L.188) concerning safety aspects of nuclear power sources in space. The Working Group also took note of a paper circulated by Pakistan on risks and radiological consequences of debris collisions with nuclear power sources (S&T/1993/CRP.2). The Working Group agreed that the working papers and other information provided by Member States provided a useful starting-point for discussions on possible ways to improve the Principles.

9. The Working Group considered a number of questions relating to possible ways of improving the Principles, including a more precise definition of terms, expanding the scope of the Principles to other uses of nuclear power in space, criteria for acceptable risk, the applicability of probabilistic risk assessment, the applicability of terrestrial nuclear safety principles, the adoption of a safety culture by those carrying out nuclear-powered space activities, the relation between space debris and the safety of nuclear power sources and the application of radiological criteria of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the International Commission on Radiological Protection (ICRP).

10. The Working Group recommended that it be reconvened next year to continue its work.